Selfridge Field, HAER No. MI-116-WW
Building #1578, (Corridor Building) (Old Base Engineering Electric)
South of East Joy Blvd., west of Taxiway C
~~Harrison Township,~~ Mt. Clemens Vicinity
Macomb County
Michigan

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
GREAT LAKES SYSTEMS OFFICE
1709 JACKSON STREET
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68102-2571

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

SELFRIDGE FIELD, HAER No. MI-116-WW
BUILDING #1578,(CORRIDOR BUILDING)
(Old Base Engineering Electric)

Location: South of East Joy Blvd., west of Taxiway C
Selfridge Air National Guard Base
Mt. Clemens vicinity, Macomb County, Michigan
U.S.G.S. Mt. Clemens East Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates: 17.348430.4718670

Significance: Building #1578 is a functional structure that supported primary communications and weapons links at a Nike missile battery at Selfridge and is therefore associated with one of the most important assemblages that most directly relates the base's role in national Cold War defense policies.

Description: This building is a single story, shed-roofed, concrete block, basically rectangular plan, 21 foot 5 inch by 24 foot 2 inch building rests on a concrete slab foundation and is shielded by a built up roof with wood frieze and fascia. Centrally positioned projecting 6 foot by 7 foot entry vestibules occur on the east and west elevations. The entry void on the east elevation faces south and the entrance on the west elevation faces north. The principal (north elevation is pierced by a steel frame window at the northeast corner, two steel pedestrian entry doors on the primary facade and the third steel pedestrian entry door in the western entry vestibule. The west elevation lacks fenestration and is defined by the projecting entry vestibule. The southern elevation lacks fenestration, while the eastern elevation is a mirror image of the western elevation.

The original floor plan was divided into three rooms and has been altered for subsequent uses. The rank of two northern rooms, 11 feet 2 inches deep, is individually accessed by the two pedestrian doors, and neither was mutually accessible from the interior. The 6 foot wide western room was a windowless vault. The 13 foot deep southern portion of the building extended between the projecting entry voids and was undivided open space. It revealed an interior access to the northeast quadrant of the building, but lacked any window fenestration. Today the western room remains undivided but the eastern room has been divided into a latrine in the northeast corner and an office in the southeast corner. This office is carpeted and paneled and has a drop ceiling.

The doors of the western room still maintain steel track overhead blast proof sliding doors manufactured by the Kinnear Manufacturing Company of Columbus, Ohio. The window apparently was shielded by a similar type of mechanism. These heavy gauge steel buffers could be activated to shield the room during alerts and war activities.

History:

Building #1578 was erected in 1956 from plans provided by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. A utilitarian structure constructed from standardized plans, this corridor building sheathed cables running from communications trailers parked on either side of it controlling communication between the Integrated Fire Control (IFC) and launcher areas at Selfridge.

Building #1578 is part of the Army Air Defense Command (ADC) Nike district that occupies a distinct complex in the southwestern portion of Selfridge, self contained and isolated from the rest of the base for functional and security reasons. Buildings #1575, #1576, #1578 and #1580 survive from the southwestern Integrated Fire Command (IFC) complex. These buildings functioned as the launching control center for the southwestern Nike batteries at Selfridge (located due south of the IFC in the southwest corner of the base associated with buildings #1572, #1573 and #1594). The IFC was the nerve center to actual launching of the missiles. A typical IFC area was located at a distance from the launcher site it controlled and had a generator building, maintenance and general operational support buildings and crew buildings since the site was operated 24 hours a day.

The 28th Artillery Group (Air Defense), a unit of the ADC under the control of NORAD, set up its headquarters at Selfridge in the southwest portion of the base in 1952. Initially in charge of administering the 90 millimeter gun emplacements for protecting cities such as Detroit, it was later assigned the responsibility of providing combat-ready air defense missile units for defense of the Detroit-Cleveland area and administered Nike missile battalions at Selfridge and others ringing Detroit and Cleveland.

In addition to missiles at Selfridge, the Detroit area firing batteries were located at Utica (Battery A), Carleton (Battery C) and Union

Lake (Battery C). Cleveland sites were located near Painesville, Bratenahl, and Fairview Park. These batteries initially used Nike Ajax missiles but later adopted the more advanced Nike Hercules missiles.

In 1969, the Nike missiles were removed from Selfridge and the remaining 28th Artillery Group administrative personnel were moved from the original location in the southwest corner of base to an area adjacent to 661st Radar Squadron. The 28th Artillery Group was deactivated 1974. Selfridge had two Nike installations with two launching sections; at U.S. installations it was more common to have one Nike base with three launching sections or pits/elevators.

Records of the Military History Institute in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, provided information on the national level for Nike facilities during the period 1954-1974 (when the last Nikes were deactivated). Approximately 300 Nike sites are identified in 30 states, including 15 in Michigan and 94 in states within a 300 mile radius. The Detroit District Corps of Engineers under the DERP/FUDS program identified 170 Formerly Used Defense Sites in Michigan, most dating to Cold War, 15 of which are Nike silos. A consultant study completed over ten years ago identified about 300 Nike sites nationally.

Nike Integrated Fire Control (IFC) and Launcher/ Missile Pits survive relatively intact at Selfridge. The structural components of launcher sites have been removed and the associated missile pits filled in. When these complexes were operational, missiles were stored below ground on either side of a central elevator. The missile pit itself was a large underground room connected to a smaller, adjacent room, called the Firing Panel Operator Room (control room). Hatches on either side of the missile pit lead to the surface and an intercom system connected the control room with surface crews. Each site had a six to eight missile capacity and surface crews would load each missile brought to the surface individually onto the launcher pads. A battery commander at the IFC complex, always located with a clear site line but at a distance from the launcher complex, would launch the missiles. All complexes maintained a backup launch capacity that permitted

launching from the Firing Panel Operator Room if the IFC was disabled. A typical launcher complex located within a secured, fenced area, was comprised of a Launcher Control Trailer, communications trailers on concrete pads that would house apparatus to contact the IFC, and the generator buildings or trailers to provide back-up power.

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Historian:

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